

## 4.11 PARKS AND RECREATION

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### 4.11.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the existing parks and recreation areas that serve the project site and potential impacts to these services from the construction and occupancy of the proposed project. The section also presents regulations and policies affecting the parks and recreation in the City. Information in this section is based on consultation with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation.

In response to the Notice of Preparation for this Environmental Impact Report (EIR), several commenters expressed concern regarding the ability of local park facilities to serve the population associated with the proposed project. Commenters also expressed concern that the proposed green space plan included in the project does not provide sufficient amenities for the residents of the proposed development. All of these scoping comments are addressed in the impact assessment presented below. Note that scoping comments related to noise from events at the Central Park are addressed in **Section 4.8, Noise**.

### 4.11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### 4.11.2.1 Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation services are provided by the City of Santa Clara, Parks and Recreation Department (department). The department is responsible for maintaining and programming the various parks and recreation facilities, and works cooperatively with public agencies in coordinating all recreational activities within the City.

All parks within Santa Clara are classified as neighborhood parks. The department currently operates 32 neighborhood parks, which all together include a total of approximately 242 acres of parkland. Neighborhood parks include amenities such as picnic areas, barbeques, restrooms, swimming pools, basketball courts, softball fields, tennis courts, play area, and buildings. Amenities vary from park to park. **Table 4.11-1, City of Santa Clara Parks Inventory**, lists each park, its size, and the amenities each park offers (Brown 2008).

**Table 4.11-1  
City of Santa Clara Parks Inventory**

<b>Park Facility Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Amenities<sup>1</sup></b>
Agnews Historic Park	14.5	none
Agnew Park	2.0	1,2,4,6,9
Everett Alvarez Park	1.5	2,4,6,9
Bowers Park	7.0	1,2,3,4,9
Bracher Park	3.5	2,3,4,6,9
Steve Carli Park	3.0	4,6,9
Central Park	52.0	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9
City Plaza Park	1.0	2
Civic Center Park	3.0	
Earl R. Carmichael Park	10.5	2,3,4,6,8,9
Fairway Glen Park	4.0	2,3,6,8,9
Fremont Park	7.0	9
Fuller Street Park	2.0	2,3,4,9
Geof Goodfellow Sesquicennial	0.25	none
Mary Gomez Park	8.0	2,3,4,5,6,8,9
Homeridge Park	6.0	2,3,4,6,9
Lick Mill Park	10.5	1,2,3,4,6,8,9
Live Oak Park	11.0	2,3,4,9
Machado Park	3.5	1,2,3,4,6,9
Larry J. Marsalli	7.0	2,3,4,7,9
Maywood Park	9.5	1,2,3,4,8,9
Memorial Cross Park	0.5	none
Montague Park	5.5	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9
Parkway Park	3.5	2,3,4,9
Rotary Park	0.5	2,3,9
Henry Schmidt Park	8.0	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9
Jenny Strand Park	5.0	2,3,4,6,8,9
Thamien Park	3.5	2,3,4,6,8,9
Ulistac Natural Area	40.0	walking trails

Park Facility Name	Acreage	Amenities <sup>1</sup>
War Memorial Playground	1.0	2,4,9
Warburton Park	6.0	2,3,4,5,6,9
Westwood Oaks Park	1.5	1,2,3,4,6,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>241.75</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Amenities Key:

1= Building

2=Picnic Areas

3=Barbeques

4=Restrooms

5=Swimming Pool

6=Basketball Courts

7=Softball Fields

8=Tennis Courts

9=Play Area

Source: City of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department 2008.

There are 11 special park facilities within the City, which include sports fields, activity centers, and a natural habitat area. The department operates a total of 78 acres of special park facilities. The Santa Clara Golf and Tennis Club consists of 155 acres, and is operated by the department. Walking trails are available within the Ullistac Natural Area, which contains 40 acres of preserved natural habitat. A portion of the Levee Regional Trail, located along the Guadalupe River, and internal walking paths are available for visitors. The San Tomas Aquino/Saratoga Creek Trail is also located within the City of Santa Clara, but is operated and maintained by the City's Engineering Department. This trail currently consists of 4 miles of paved trail for walking, running, and bicycling, and will be extended to span 12.5 miles in length.

Parks near the project site include Central Park, Homestead Park, and Mary Gomez Park. Central Park located directly east of the project site, across Kiely Boulevard, has an area of 52 acres. City staff permits concerts, sporting events, and other events, including the arts and wine festival and a fireworks show on July 4<sup>th</sup> at the Central Park. Recreational activities at the Central Park include concerts held at the Arbor Center and the Pavilion, and sporting events at the International Swim Center and Sports Center. Homeridge Park is approximately 2,000 feet south of the project site, located at 2985 Stevenson Street, and consists of 6 acres of parkland. Mary Gomez Park has 8 acres of parkland, and is approximately 4,000 feet southeast of the project site, located at 651 Bucher Avenue. These three parks together would provide the residents of the proposed project all the amenities listed in **Table 4.11-1**.

The department operates a total of 501.25 acres of open space in the City of Santa Clara. Of that acreage, about 242 acres are considered parkland (see **Table 4.11-1**). The department strives to maintain an

average population ratio of 2.40 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Based on the City's 2008 population of 115,503 residents, using this ratio, the City is deficient by 35 acres of parkland.<sup>1</sup> There are no Santa Clara County Parks located within the City. No new City parks and recreational facilities are planned at this time (Friedenbach 2008). Improvements are proposed for International Swim Center located on the east side of Central Park. These improvements would include two new pools with mechanical and support facilities to meet required codes and a 24,000 square-foot Swim Center Building to house locker rooms, team offices, swim meet officials, personnel support room, lifeguard staff offices and entry lobby. These improvements are planned, but have not been funded. However, funding is anticipated in the near future.

### 4.11.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### 4.11.3.1 Significance Criteria

The impact of the proposed project on parks and recreation would be considered significant if it would exceed the following standards of significance, in accordance with Appendix G of the 2008 *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines*:

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered neighborhood parks or the need for new or physically altered parks, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain performance objectives for parks.
- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

#### 4.11.3.2 Issues Not Discussed Further

The project does not include public recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities off site. Therefore, this issue is not discussed further.

#### 4.11.3.3 Methodology

The department was contacted to determine parkland requirements for new development and whether there are any existing park and recreational deficiencies. The demand for parks and recreational facilities

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<sup>1</sup> Using the rate of 2.4 acres/1,000 residents, 277 acres of parkland are required for the City's 115,503 residents. The City currently has 241.75 acres of parkland. There is therefore a shortfall of about 35 acres of parkland based on the City's current population.

generated by the proposed project was then estimated and compared to the ability of the project or City park facilities to meet the anticipated demand.

#### 4.11.3.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Impact REC-1:**            **The proposed project would be required to provide 5.2 acres of parkland on or off site in compliance with the City's parkland standard. (*Significant, Less than Significant with Mitigation*)**

The department strives to provide 2.40 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. As discussed earlier, based on the City's 2008 population of 115,503 residents, using this ratio, the City is deficient by 35 acres of parkland. The proposed project would generate an additional 2,080 residents in the City. The department determined that the project would require a park dedication of 5.2 acres. Therefore, to address the park needs of the proposed project and to avoid an increase in the deficiency of parkland acreage in the City, the proposed project would be required to construct 5.2 acres of parkland on or off site.

Although on-site parkland is not proposed as part of the project, the project would provide approximately 9 acres of active and passive green space on the site (see **Figure 3.0-6, Green Space**). A majority of this green space is provided along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to Saratoga Creek and between the project and the homes along Marietta Drive. A 100-foot creek setback would be dedicated along the southern boundary of the site between the Miles Drive cul-de-sac and Kiely Boulevard, north of the Saratoga Creek channel. The remaining green space would be provided for each housing type as shown in **Figure 3.0-6**. Also, **Table 3.0-3, Green Space for Project Site** in **Section 3.0, Project Description** of this EIR provides the acreage of green space that would be provided for each housing type. Furthermore, recreational amenities would be provided on site, which would include facilities for both active and passive recreation. Active recreational areas include a swimming pool, spa area, fitness center, and clubroom for the apartment portion of the development, and a swimming pool and spa areas for the town houses and row houses on the site. Passive recreational areas include the large setbacks along the southern boundary of the site that would provide pedestrian trails that interconnect with other pedestrian walkways on the site.

Pedestrian circulation would be provided throughout the site (see **Figure 3.0-7, Conceptual Pedestrian Circulation Diagram**). Pedestrian circulation includes the proposed pathways that provide pedestrians access throughout the project site. A 100-foot creek setback, approximately 1.26 acres in area, would be dedicated along the southern boundary of the site between the Mile Drive cul-de-sac and Kiely Boulevard, north of the Saratoga Creek channel. A 5-foot-wide pedestrian path would be constructed within this 100-foot creek setback area and would extend in a northwest direction along the southern

boundary of the project site, where existing mature trees would be preserved. The pedestrian path would also extend to the north providing access to the internal roadways and other portions of the site, including the multi-family units, town houses, and Kaiser Drive. A 10-foot-wide multipurpose (bicycle/pedestrian) trail would traverse the southeast property line adjacent to Saratoga Creek. This trail would connect to a 13-foot-wide bicycle/pedestrian lane that would traverse the eastern site boundary (see **Figure 3.0-8, Conceptual Landscaping Plan**). The trail would include a 5-foot sidewalk and an 8-foot multi-use trail for pedestrian and bicycle use. This trail would lead to the Kiely Boulevard and Kaiser Drive intersection, to allow pedestrians and cyclists safe access to Central Park via the crosswalk at that intersection.

The department has indicated that they would apply some credit for the 9 acres of passive and active recreational green space that would be provided on site. The department proposes a 50 percent credit for private recreation facilities provided on site and a 25 percent credit for the 100-foot creek setback. The project would receive a private recreation credit from the department for 2.26 acres. The project would have a remaining parkland dedication requirement of 2.94 acres. Because the project does not include plans to create 2.94 acres of parkland off site, the project does not fully satisfy the City's parkland dedication requirement. This is considered a significant impact.

**Mitigation Measure REC-1:** The project applicant would be required to pay park in-lieu fees to satisfy the City's parkland dedication requirement.

**Significance After Mitigation:** The City has determined that payment of in-lieu fees represents full and complete mitigation for parkland impacts. Therefore, implementation of **Mitigation Measure REC-1** would reduce the project's impact to a less-than-significant level.

The fees paid by the applicant would be used by the City to provide improved or expanded recreational facilities. The City is determining the best use of the collected funds, but it is likely that the monies would be used to make improvements to Central Park. Regardless, any improvements associated with the in-lieu fees would be applied to existing City recreational facilities. Because these facilities are already developed and the sites are disturbed, the potential for the improvements to result in significant secondary environmental impacts is minimal.

**Impact REC-2:**            **Development of the proposed project would increase the use of existing neighborhood parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated. (Potentially Significant, Less than Significant with Mitigation)**

As described above, the department strives to provide 2.40 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This ratio has been developed by the City in order to add parkland as the City's population grows so that overcrowding and excessive use of the City's park facilities do not occur. As noted earlier, based on the City's 2008 population of 115,503 residents, using this ratio, the City is deficient by 35 acres of parkland. Therefore, the increased population associated with the proposed project could contribute to the overuse of existing parks near the project site that could potentially lead to deterioration of park facilities. This is considered a potentially significant impact.

**Mitigation Measure REC-2: Implement Mitigation Measure REC-1.**

**Significance After Mitigation:** The proposed project would provide passive and active recreational facilities on site, and the proposed project would provide compensatory mitigation for its impact on City parks (see **Mitigation Measure REC-1**). This compensatory mitigation would also address the project's impact on existing recreational facilities related to deterioration from overuse. The department has indicated that the compensatory mitigation would be applied to enhancing existing parks and local improvements. The enhancement of existing facilities includes upgrading existing play equipment to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. By providing adequate compensatory parkland mitigation, the project would avoid over-use of existing park facilities and the impact related to the physical deterioration of the neighborhood parks would be less than significant.

#### **4.11.3.5 Cumulative Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The following analysis evaluates the significance of potential cumulative impacts of the proposed project in conjunction with the impacts of the projects included in **Table 4.0-1, Related Projects**. For the purposes of this analysis, this EIR conservatively assumes that all projects on that list would be approved and operational by 2013. Based on an average household size of 2.58 persons (see **Section 4.9, Population and Housing**), the 1,421 housing units that would be added to the City of Santa Clara by the cumulative projects would result in an increase in population of 5,746 persons (including increase in population from the proposed project). Based on the department requirements of 2.40 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the buildout of the current proposed and planned projects in the City, including the proposed project, would require approximately 14 acres of additional parkland. Each of these developments would be required to provide parkland on or off site in compliance with the department's requirements, and

therefore, the impacts of each project could be mitigated on a project-by-project basis. However, given that the City is largely developed, and most of the future development in the City consists of redevelopment of existing developed sites, opportunities to add parkland in the City are limited. Therefore, this EIR conservatively assumes that buildout of the projects listed in **Table 4.0-1** would have a significant cumulative impact to parklands, in that 14 acres of additional parkland may not be added to the City.

The project would mitigate its project-specific parkland impacts by payment of the park in-lieu fees so the department can enhance existing facilities within the City. This would mitigate the project's contribution to the cumulative parkland impact and the project's contribution to the cumulative impact would not be cumulatively considerable.

#### 4.11.4 REFERENCES

Brown, K. 2008. City of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department. Personal communication with M. Knudson at Impact Sciences, Inc. February 26.

City of Santa Clara. *Parks and Recreation Department Fact Sheet, FY 2006-07*.

Friedenbach, G. 2008. Acting Director. City of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department. Personal communication with M. Knudson at Impact Sciences, Inc. February 19.